

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0629

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR

SUBJ: JOURNALIST'S IMPRESSION OF SINO-SOVIET BORDER

1. NEVILLE MAXWELL, BRITISH AUTHOR-JOURNALIST, RECENTLY WAS ACCORDED VISIT TO HEILUNGKIANG PROVINCE WHERE HE WAS SHOWN FOUR POINTS ON THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER, INCLUDING CHEN PAO ISLAND, ANOTHER POINT SOUTH OF CHEN PAO ON THE USSURI AND TWO ALONG THE AMUR RIVER WEST OF KHABAROVSK. HE DID NOT VISIT THE HEI HSIATZU-TAO AREA AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE CONFLUENCE OF THE AMUR AND USSURI RIVERS. MAXWELL SAID HE FOUND SITUATION CALM WITH NO CHINESE TROOPS IN EVIDENCE, BUT OBVIOUS PATROLLING ON THE SOVIET SIDE. HE TOLD UK EMBOFF THAT CHINESE SIDE OF THE BORDER NOW GUARDED EXCLUSIVELY BY MILITIA, A CLAIM WHICH BOTH UK AND WE FIND HARD TO CREDIT. CHEN PAO ISLAND IS NOW IN CHINESE HANDS, AND PATROLLED BY CHINESE TROOPS.

2. ACCORDING TO THE CHINESE VERSION OF THE BORDER CLASHES OF MARCH 1969, THEY SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES IN THE FIRST INCIDENT BUT SUCCEEDED IN DEFEATING THE SOVIETS IN THE SECOND INCIDENT WHEN THE SOVIETS FAILED TO CONCENTRATE MASSIVE ENOUGH FORCES AGAINST THE CHINESE POSITION.

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3. MAXWELL PLANS TO WRITE ARTICLES ON THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER

DISPUTE FOR PUBLICATION IN LONDON. HE IS CONVINCED THAT THE
CHINESE LEGAL POSITION IS UNASSAILABLE. CLEARLY THE CHINESE
FEEL THAT MAXWELL WILL WRITE ABOUT THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER IN A
FASHION SIMILAR TO HIS BOOK ON THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER AND ACCORDED
HIM THIS RATE VISIT TO A SENSITIVE AREA.
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